

DOH STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

161 Delaware Avenue Delmar, NY 12054-1393

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

June 28, 2006

DQS/DAL: #06-09
Physician's Assistants Authorization
To Write Inpatient Medical Orders

Dear Long Term Administrator:

As you know, on November 23, 2005 Article 37 of the Public Health Law was amended. This authorizes physician's assistants (PA) to write inpatient medical orders without a supervising physician's countersignature, if permissible under the provider's medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations. This letter clarifies that this change applies to nursing homes.

The new law offers more flexibility to determine how physician supervision of PAs will be demonstrated. A nursing home may develop an approach that would terminate the countersignature requirement for inpatient medical orders written by PAs or institute a tiered system that would eliminate the countersignature requirement as the PA demonstrates increased competencies secondary to training and experience. Alternatively, a nursing home can still opt to maintain the countersignature requirement for their PAs.

Whether a nursing home decides to maintain, terminate, or develop a tiered approach to this issue, the Department of Health would expect that the nursing home's medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations would clearly address the issue and describe the plan for assuring evidence of continuous PA supervision.

Please ensure that the information in this letter is provided to all appropriate staff, and contact Denise Breliia-Hyland at (518) 408-1267 if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Keith W. Servis, Director
Division of Quality and Surveillance
for Nursing Homes and ICFs/MR